

What's so jolly about phonics?

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What is Jolly Phonics?

'Jolly Phonics'!?... I had never seen anything remotely 'jolly' about phonics. A friend from a sister school had been waxing lyrical about it and I was sceptical.

After viewing how it worked in her classroom, I was left feeling overwhelmed about where to start to put it into practice in my classroom—something I was sure I wanted to do. With a plethora of aids available but limited funds, we decided to buy only the textbook at first. From there we wanted to work out how to make it our own.

Jolly Phonics was started in England by Sue Lloyd and is, simply stated, a multi-sensory way of quickly and efficiently learning the alphabet. The 26 letters, in addition to 16 digraphs, are included, making a total of 42 sounds. Sue Lloyd maintains that all 42 sounds can be taught in nine weeks by doing a new letter or digraph every day.

Teaching the letters and sounds

Children learn each letter and sound through a variety of multi-sensory activities and a simple action for each.

Sue Lloyd introduces letters and digraphs. We choose to disregard her letter order and introduce our own. In the first term, we cover all the letters of the alphabet—approximately three a week. We do them in the following order and give each group our own title.

1. Straight down letters—i l t j f
2. Across the top letters—c o a d g q
3. Down, up and over the hill letters—r n m p h b k
4. Down in the valley letters—v u y w
5. No relation letters—e s x z

Generally speaking, this order allows each new letter to build on the shape of previously learned letters.

At the beginning of Term 1, we test the children to see how many letters they can read and write. At the end of the Term, we repeat the test. The results are placed in each student's portfolio. We place the

Here's an example of how we teach 'Tt'

We introduce the letter with a story about going to watch a tennis match. We pretend we're following the ball with our eyes from left to right and we make a 't' sound each time the ball lands. This is the action associated with the sound 't'. We also eat tiny teddies while we pretend to watch the tennis.

After our initial story introduction, we break into groups to do rotation activities.

1. Children stick toothpicks on a large 't' shape.
2. They roll play dough and place it over 't' laminated cards.
3. They use play dough to make objects that begin with 't'.
4. They practise writing 't' (and previously learnt letters) on whiteboards.
5. They draw pictures of things that start with 't'.
6. They trace a sand letter 't' with their fingers and sing T says 't' to the tune of 'Skip to my Lou'.
7. They load teddies on trains with ten in each carriage.
8. They crawl through tunnels of chairs in a 't' shape.

“Children learn each letter and sound through a variety of multi-sensory activities and a simple action for each”



[Photography:
Coralie Fraser]

Reflections, Impressions & Experiences

pages next to each other so the parents can see the progress made in one Term.

At the end of Term 1, we send home a bound book that contains a craft or activity to match each letter of the alphabet. It has the child's photo on the laminated cover along with the title, 'Tyson's amazing alphabet book'. This production is highly prized by its owners. In Terms 2 and 3, we choose to introduce one digraph a week. At the same time, we spend a revision week on each alphabet letter, reinforcing our Term 1 learning and enriching it with a variety of language experiences.

Jolly Phonics and reading

Jolly Phonics deals with words that cannot be sounded out by referring to them as 'tricky' words, which are learnt as sight words. We refer to them as 'disobedient' words, that is, they don't obey our sounding out rules.

At the same time as we are learning our letters in first Term, the children also take home flip cards with their sight words to learn. Children are able to work at their own pace. Additional words are added to the ring when the child demonstrates competency with the current word list.

Jolly Phonics fun fair

To celebrate our achievements at the end of Term 1, we have a Jolly Phonics Fun Fair. We ask that each child bring a parent, special relative or friend with whom to enjoy the special event, which runs for the whole morning.

Our fair has 26 stalls, one for each letter of the alphabet. These stalls range from A for curly whirly apples to J for jumping castle, and P for painting plaster moulds to F for face painting. The groups spend 6 minutes at each stall, changing over when the bell rings. A leader is assigned to each group to help the children fully participate in the activities.

Each student receives a paper bag to hold special things collected throughout the morning and to carry their alphabet book. Each paper bag has

a letter printed on it to indicate the station at which the child should start. When they first get to a stall, students need to find the appropriate letter in their alphabet book and have the page stamped. This gives additional visual reinforcement of the letter.

The fair is a great way to round off a term of fun experiences and yes, I have to agree, it has been 'jolly'! TEACH

Jolly Phonics fun fair letter stations

- A — Curly whirly apples
- B — Ball pit
- C — Crazy critters
- D — Dress-ups
- E — Decorating eggs
- F — Face painting
- G — Gator rides
- H — Hat decorating
- I — Ice cream
- J — Jumping castle
- K — Fruit kebabs
- L — Lego
- M — Marshmallow mice
- N — Noodle necklace
- O — Obstacle course
- P — Plaster painting
- Q — Quiz and quoits
- R — Rocket launch
- S — Sand play
- T — Tea party
- U — Useful box
- V — Vegetable prints
- W — Water play
- X — X hunt
- Y — Yo-yos & yo-yos
- Z — Zoobs & zoos

For further information or jolly phonics resources, contact Coralie Fraser: cfraser@avondaleschool.nsw.edu.au

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